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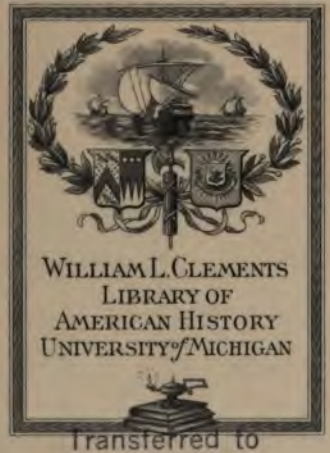

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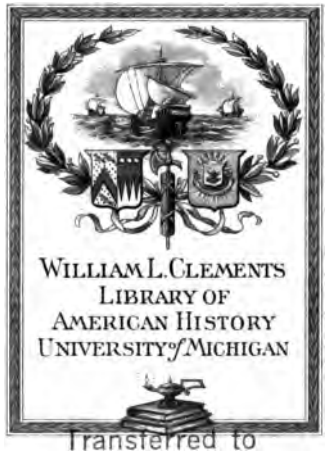

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CABOT'S VOYAGES.

A LECTURE

DELIVERED IN

ST. PATRICK'S HALL

FOR THE ATHENÆUM,

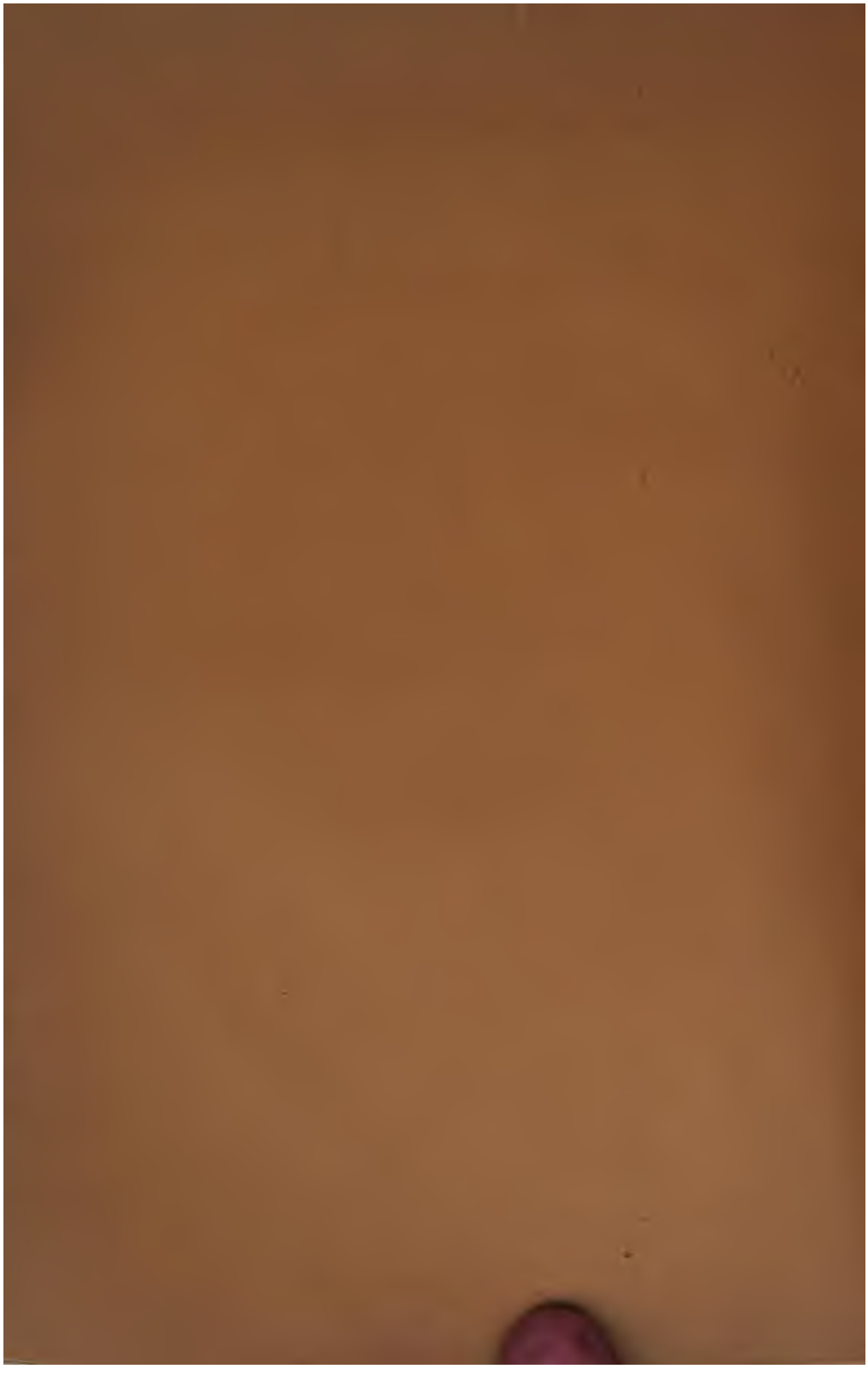
ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND.

BY THE

RIGHT REV. BISHOP HOWLEY,

JANUARY 11th 1897.

DEVINE & O'MARA, printers.



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CABOT'S VOYAGES.

It is but natural that a people, living upon the borders of the great ocean; looking out daily across its boundless waste, and seeing its mighty billows, breaking in ceaseless roar upon the rocks, should begin to wonder whence they came, and to picture to themselves some far-off land lying beyond—a land of legendry beauty, peopled by a strange race of beings. These thoughts have been embodied in that sweetest of all Moore's verses—

"How dear to me the hour when daylight dies,
* * * * * *
And as I watch the line of light, that plays
Along the smooth wave towards the burning West,
I long to tread that golden path of rays,
And think 'twould lead to some bright Isle of rest."

The tradition of this Western Isle or country is to be found in the folk-lore of all peoples dwelling on the Atlantic seaboard. In Ireland it is called the Tir-n'an-Og—the land of the Young Virgin, or the land of perpetual life. It is thought that a sight of this beautiful island is a presage of death. Thus, in the poem of Eleanor C. Donnelly, the dying boy addresses his mother:—

"And then I saw it—the fairy city,
Far away o'er the waters deep,
Towers and castles, and chapels glowing
Like blessed dreams that we see in sleep.

What is its name?—Be still Achushla!
Thy hair is wet with the mists, my boy,
Thou hast looked, perchance, on the Tir-n'an-og—
Land of eternal youth and joy."

In France, Britany, Spain, and the western sea-coast of Europe, this tradition was strongly developed, and entered into all the folk-lore. These *fabulous islands of the ocean* were

often said to have been seen, with their lofty mountains, their forest-covered plains, and cool, shady valleys. They received different names in different countries; thus we have the Ogygia of Homer, the Atlantis of Plato, the Antilia of Aristotle, the Hesperides of the Latins, the Hy Brazil, or fount of everlasting life, of the Kelts, etc., etc.

Towards the latter half of the XV century, these vague and romantic traditions and mythical legends began to yield to a more practical and solid belief in the existence of a western world, tho, up to the time of Columbus, and even for many years after, a strong mixture of the fabulous and poetic element still continued to modify the more prosaic and scientific theories of the learned men of Europe. Little by little the hardy fishermen of Britany and of the Basque Provinces had pushed their voyages westwards over the unknown tracts of the great ocean, sometimes in quest of adventure, and actuated by that desire of knowing and seeing more of this great world, and its hidden wonders—the "*Wander Lust*" of the Germans.

In the archives of St. Jean De Luz, it is stated that in the early part of the XV century the inhabitants of that city had discovered Newfoundland and its fisheries.

"Already since 1412," writes Leonce Goyetche (hist. of St. Jean De Luz), "whale fishers had penetrated as far as Iceland." It is a well-established fact that, towards the third quarter of the XV century, or about 1475, "the English traded with Iceland, and a large commerce was maintained with it by Bristol" (Justin Winsor, Columbus, page 138). It is generally believed, though it is not absolutely proved, that Columbus made a voyage to Iceland about this time, and that he heard there the tradition of a western land which induced him afterwards to undertake his celebrated voyage.

It was probably about this time (1480) that John Cabot came to Bristol, and was an active participator in all the commercial and adventurous enterprises of that city.

JOHN CABOT.

Concerning John Cabot, we know the following facts:—He was an Italian, probably born in Genoa. He is called a

Genoese by Stowe in his Chronicles, also by Pedro de Ayala, who says he was "a Genoese like Columbus." But in the charter or patent of Henry VII, given to the Cabots, John is styled "*Civis Venetianus*" (citizen of Venice). This puzzled some historians, until the archives of Venice being searched, the record was found dated 28th March, 1476, of the conferring on him of the freedom of the city of Venice, "after a continued residence of fifteen years." Hence we find that he went to settle in Venice in 1461, and as he must have been capable of fulfilling the duties of a citizen at that time, he would have been about twenty-one or twenty-two years of age. Hence he would have been born about the year 1439 or 1440, that is to say about the same time as Columbus, of whom he was a fellow-citizen, and probably a companion and schoolfellow. He married in Venice, about the year 1470, and Sebastian, his second son, was born about 1472 or 3.

John Cabot was in Venice for at least three years after the birth of Sebastian, as it was not until 1476, as stated above, that he received the citizenship of Venice. During his stay in that city he made a journey to the East and went as far as Mecca. This was probably in 1478. There he met caravans of merchants, bringing loads of spices and gems from China and Japan. He learned from these merchants that the country whence these precious and coveted articles came, was "far away to the East, near the North"* (Soncini). This information inspired Cabot with the idea which dominated his after life, namely, to find a passage to Cathay and Zipango, towards the northwest.

What time he came to settle in Bristol has not been exactly ascertained. All we know for certain is that he was there in 1491. Pedro de Ayala, prothonotary and ambassador of Spain at London, writing in 1498 (25th July) to Ferdinand and Isabella, says: "The citizens of Bristol, for the past seven years, have sent out every year, two, three, or four vessels, in search of the Isle of *Bresil*, and of the *Seven Cities*, at the inspiration of this Genoese," that is, John Cabot. Hence we conclude

*Da lontani paesi, al Septentrione verso l'occidente (i.e., Oriente, M. F. H.)

that at least in the year 1491, he was a man of influence in the commercial world of Bristol. It can scarcely be doubted then, that he must have made several voyages to Iceland, and that he knew well, as we shall see, the course to that Island. There he would have heard the ever-living traditions of the Western lands, discovered by the Norsemen in the IX and X centuries.

GREENLAND.

It appears to me quite clear, that altho the colonies founded by the Norsemen in Greenland, Helluland, Markland, and Vinland, failed and disappeared, yet the Northmen of Iceland never altogether lost their connection with these western lands. In the year 876 or 886, Gunbjarn discovered Greenland. In 986 Bjarni discovered the mainland of America. In the year 1000 we have the famous voyage of Lief Ericson, and the founding of the colony of Vinland. In 1011 this colony was visited by Thorfinn. In 1055, in the annals of the Episcopal See of Skalholdt in Iceland, mention is made of Markland. Again, in 1073, Adam Bremensis mentions Helluland and Vinland. In 1285, two priests from Iceland, named Athalbrand and Thorwald, made a visit to these western lands. They gave the name of *Nuja-funda-lande*, which is the first mention we have of this venerable and historic name. In 1290 Eric Magnusson, king of Norway, sent one Ralf to explore these lands. He received the title of Ralf Landa, on account of his discoveries.

In 1334, the name of the Gulf of Markland is mentioned by Hank Erlendsson. He speaks of a vessel with eighteen men coming from there, in 1347. The Annals of Iceland (Fläteyar Bok) relate a voyage from Greenland to Markland, and again in 1394. About the year 1400, we have the narration of Zeno, of the voyage of a sailor of the Feroe Islands to Estoti Land or Nova Scotia.

In 1431, Eric, King of Pomerania and the Scandinavian Union, mentions these countries among the Norwegian colonies.

In 1490, King John of Norway grants permission to England to fish at Iceland, Greenland, Orkneys, Shetlands, Feroes

"and the other isles belonging to Norway," by which is meant, no doubt, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

The Ecclesiastical Records, preserved in the Vatican archives, and which were sent by Pope Leo XIII to the Chicago Exhibition, show a communication with Greenland ranging over 400 years.

The conversion of Greenland to Christianity is attributed to the holy King, St Olav, in 1030. In 1055, Adhalbert, Archbishop of Bremen, sent Albert as first Bishop of Greenland. The Cathedral See was at Gardar.

There is a letter from Pope Innocent III to the Archbishop of Drontheim, dated 1206, in which the diocese of Greenland is made a suffragan of the Metropolitan See of Drontheim or Nidras.

In 1281, there is a letter from Pope Martin IV, mentioning the offerings made by the people of Greenland for Peter's Pence, and for the expenses of the Crusades, namely: skins of the elk-deer and the seal, and the teeth and ropes (funes) of whales.

In 1448, there is a letter from Pope Nicholas V to the Bishops of Skalholdt and Holar, in Iceland, mentioning Greenland. The Pope says that thirty years ago (namely in 1418) the country of Greenland was devastated with fire and sword by "barbarians from the neighboring Pagan shores." Several churches and the "splendid cathedral" were destroyed, "only nine parochial churches were left untouched." This shows that the colony must have been of considerable importance, and some vestiges of it remained up to the very time of Columbus, for we find that in 1492 Pope Alexander VI appointed Matthias, a monk of St. Benedict, as Bishop of Gardar, in Greenland.

This rather lengthy digression is necessary, as I shall show by-and-by to the full understanding of the question at issue. It is quite clear that, at the time immediately preceding the voyages of Columbus and Cabot, there was, not only as Lord Bacon remarks (quoted by Zurla in "Viaggio di Marco Polo"), "a tradition (*memoria*) of some lands before discovered towards

the North-west," but that there was (at least among the learned) a very clearly defined knowledge of the western world. I shall return to this point later on.

EARLY NAVIGATORS.

I do not, however, wish to detract anything from the fame and the glory of these great navigators. If we consider the undeveloped state of nautical science at that time, the imperfect knowledge of the variation of the compass, of the force and direction of the great ocean currents, etc. If we consider also the crude state of naval architecture, and compare their small and "clumsy caravels" with our ocean palaces of to-day; but, above all, if we consider the dread and superstitious terror arising from the ignorance of the vast regions of space, peopled as they were with a thousand horrors and phantoms, demons and monsters, which it took more than a century to dissipate. Some idea of these imaginary terrors may be gathered from the graphic description given of them by Adam of Bremen. He mentions how some noblemen of Frisland determined to discover what was at the northward of Iceland, and all known lands. "They came," he says, "to the end of the earth's axis, and immediately fell into that pitch darkness of the frozen ocean which can not be penetrated by the eyesight. And, behold that uncertain gulf which, rushing back to its hidden source, dragged with it, with tremendous force, the unfortunate sailors, now despairing of all hope of safety, and thinking of nothing but death, as they rushed headlong into chaos. This is the throat of the abyss, that bottomless hole into which it is said are swallowed up all the sources of the ocean, which are seen regularly to decrease and increase. Then, imploring the Divine assistance, some of the ships were entirely engulphed, others were driven back on the reflux of the tide, and escaped. After that they came on an island where there were men of immense size, whom we call cyclopians, who had dogs with them, very much larger than our ordinary dogs, which caught and tore to pieces some of their companions."

Considering, I say, all these things, it cannot be doubted

that the undertakings of Columbus and Cabot must be numbered amongst the most glorious and heroic enterprises that have ever been performed in the history of the world. This dread of facing the unknown regions may be the reason why John Cabot (altho endeavoring ever since the year 1491—if not even before that—to arouse the enthusiasm of the merchants of Bristol to the point of fitting out an expedition to explore the western lands) could not succeed. At all events, it was not till some time in the year 1495, nearly two years after Columbus' return from his first voyage, that he at length succeeded in getting a charter from the King, and it was another year before he was able to get his expedition underway.

The *Patent or Royal Commission* given to Cabot by Henry VII is dated March 5th, 1495. The charter is given to "John Cabot, Venetian citizen; Louis, Sebastian, and Sanctius, sons of the said John." They received power "to navigate in all countries, lands and seas, east, west and north . . . . . with five vessels of whatever size and tonnage they might choose, and to take as many men and sailors as they thought fit." But the expedition was to be fitted out "at their own personal expense and cost." And, moreover, not only did the King not give them any financial assistance, but the Cabots were "held and obliged to pay to the King, in money or in mer-"chandise, the fifth part of the entire profits of all the fruits, "profits, gains and merchandise, which might come from this "voyage, for each one of their voyagers, every time they shall "arrive in our port of Bristol (where they shall be obliged to "land, and nowhere else)."

FLORENTINE STYLE OR OLD STYLE.

Concerning this document, we have to notice in the first place that it is dated 5th March, 1495. The correction of the Calendar, by Pope Gregory XIII, did not take place till nearly one hundred years after this date, namely, in 1582, and it was not accepted in England until nearly two hundred years more, namely, 1752. According to the new Gregorian Calendar, the beginning of the year was fixed to the first of January, as it had been in the ancient Roman Calendar, revised by Julius

Cæsar. Before the adoption of the Gregorian correction, England followed what was known as the *Florentine Style*, or *Old Style*. According to this style, the year commenced on the 25th of March. Hence it will appear that the Patent given to the Cabots, being dated 5th of March, 1495, was dated within 20 days of the end of the year '95; and, according to our present way of calculating, it would be in the spring or third month of the year 1496. Some doubt has been thrown on the date by the fact that Rymer, in his *Fœdera*, gives the date as 1496. But, as the document contains another dating, viz., "eleventh year" of the reign of Henry VII, all doubt is removed. The King ascended the throne after the battle of Bosworth Field, August 22nd, 1485. Hence March 5th, 1495, O.S. ('96, N.S.), was in the eleventh year of his reign. This is an important consideration in the study of these voyages. We find from the archives of the city of Bristol that the expedition did not sail till May 2nd, 1497. This was fourteen months after the date of the Patent. If it were not for the above consideration, we would be misled into thinking that the delay extended over two years and two months, viz., from March, '95, to May, '97. But, when we remember that March, '95, was, in reality, March, '96, it only gives a delay of fourteen months. But, nevertheless, even the delay of fourteen months is considerable, and the causes of it may be sought in the remarks already made.

CABOT'S EXPEDITION.

Firstly, Cabot may have found it difficult to engage a crew who would have the courage to face the dangers of such a voyage. Secondly, he may not have been able to procure the necessary funds to fit out the expedition. This also would appear to be the case from the very meagre manner in which the expedition was organized. Although he had permission to fit out five ships, only one vessel, the *Matthew*, was equipped; a small ship of about fifty tons, and manned by sixteen sailors, and one Burgundian, and a Genoese. John Cabot took command; and it seems certain that Sebastian, who was then about twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, accompanied

him. They started from Bristol on May 2nd, 1497, and returned on August 6th of the same year, having been away for three months and four days.

There was great rejoicing all over England on the return of the voyagers, as testified by Pasquaglio. John Cabot was called the "great admiral." A second patent was given by King Henry to John Cabot, bearing date the 3rd of February, 1497 (Old Style), viz., in the thirteenth year of Henry's reign. This voyage started from Bristol on the 2nd of May, 1498. It is not known when they returned, but they had not returned up to the end of October, and it is probable that they wintered in the New-found-land.

There can be no doubt that John Cabot made full and accurate records of the first voyage. He kept a daily log; plotted out his courses and distances on a map made especially for the purpose, and even made a solid sphere or globe, on which he showed the exact spot of the landfall. All these maps and records have mysteriously disappeared; hence the interminable dispute over the landfall. There is a strong suspicion that they were purloined and sent off to Spain by DePuebla, the Spanish ambassador. Certain it is that he watched Cabot's movements most closely, and reported them regularly to Ferdinand and Isabella. He says, in one of his letters, that he thinks the land discovered by Cabot is the same as that discovered by Columbus for Spain. But that Cabot, in order to make it appear different, had made a false map.

BEWILDERING CONFUSION.

The absence of these authentic records of the first voyage of Cabot, has caused historians to fall back upon second-hand evidence, sometimes in writing, sometimes merely oral. Hence there has arisen a bewildering confusion, and the account of what occurred on the second voyage, as well as the dates and names of places, have become intermingled in such a way with those of the first voyage, that it is very difficult to sift them and apply them to their proper places.

Fortunately, however, some few documents have been recently discovered, which undoubtedly refer to the first voyage.

because they were written before the voyagers set out on the second voyage, or before they returned from it.

The first contemporary and authentic document is a letter, dated August 23rd, 1497, written by a certain Lorenzo Pasquaglio, a Venetian merchant, residing in London, and addressed to his brothers, Aloysio and Francesco, at Venice. The second is a letter written almost at the same date (Aug. 24th), by Don Raimondo Soncini, envoy of the duke of Milan at the Court of Henry VII. Thirdly, we have another letter, written by Raimondo Soncini, and dated December 18th, 1497, addressed also to the same personage. These three letters were written after the return from the first voyage, and before the departure on the second. Hence they concern the first voyage only, and they bear intrinsic evidence of authenticity.

There is one other letter which was written on July 25th, 1498, by Don Pedro de Ayala, ambassador of Spain, in London. This was after the departure of the Cabots on the second voyage; but they were still absent in the Western Ocean. They had not returned up to October 31st, 1498. Hence the statements in this letter concern the *first* voyage only. These are the only letters extant which, for a certainty, speak of the first voyage, and of the first voyage only. The other authors who have written on the subject, wrote after the return from the second voyage, and have got the accounts of the two voyages confused and confounded; hence we can only use their evidence sparingly and with great caution, and as throwing indirectly some light on the question. We shall now proceed to consider the direct and contemporaneous evidence.

Raimondo, in the letter of 18th December, 1497, says that Cabot, having rounded the southwest coast of Ireland, "bent his course to the northward for a few days; after that, he left the north on the starboard side—the right hand *(a mano dritta)*—and began to sail towards the East."

DETOUR TO THE NORTH.

Here it may be necessary to remark that the writers of those days spoke of the West as the East, in which, of course, they were, in a sense, correct. Believing in the rotundity of the

earth, they knew that if they could proceed far enough to the West, they should come to the East. This statement of Raimondo's, thus simply dropped, is of the utmost importance in the study of these voyages, and of the landfall. From this statement it is evident that Cabot did not sail westwards from Cape Clear, which is in North Latitude 51½°, or almost directly opposite to, or eastwards from, the entrance to the Straits of Belle Isle, and the most northern point of Newfoundland, but from a point somewhat further North. We have now to consider why did Cabot make this detour to the North? In the first place we must remember his main object was to find a passage to Cathay and Zipango, well towards the North-west, so as not to encroach upon the coasts then being discovered and explored by Columbus, which he knew were more to the West and South. Secondly, his reason for coasting along the west shore of Ireland, instead of striking out west from Cape Clear, was that he wished to keep as long as possible on the well-known and well-beaten track to Iceland, before trusting himself to the vast unknown regions of the West. He wanted, according to the nautical phrase, to "keep along shore" as long as he could, to make, in other words, "a Cabotage." Hence, the words of Gomara throw some light on this point: "He took the course to Iceland." This was a route, as we have seen, well known to Cabot, and, by following this, he was going over a well-beaten track.

Again, we know from a conversation reported by Ramusio, that Cabot was acquainted with the principle of great circle sailing (Winsor, Life of Columbus, page 341) and claimed that his course to the North-west would open India by a shorter route than the westerly run of Columbus. Again, as we have already remarked, he had learned from the Arabian merchants that the lands of Cathay and Zipango were to be found towards the North-west. And, finally, there can be no doubt that Cabot was well acquainted with the position of Greenland, from his intercourse with the Icelanders, who, we have seen, were well aware of this great Island-Continent, lying away only 200 miles west from them, and stretching southwards as far as the 60th degree of latitude. We have seen from the

Papal documents quoted, that Greenland was not only known, but *inhabited*, up to the time of Columbus and Cabot, 1492. But, geographically, it was considered to be a part of Europe. About the time Cabot was making his vain efforts to discover the imaginary islands of the Western Ocean, namely, towards the third quarter of the XV century, there were many vague stories abroad concerning the passage to Cathay, by the north-west. These rumors found a place in the histories of Gomara and Wytfliet, to the effect that in 1476 a Danish expedition, under Kolno, had discovered this passage.

MAPS AND RECORDS.

The peninsula of Greenland, stretching out west from Scandinavia, and encircling Iceland on the north, and coming down on the westward of Iceland as far as the 63rd degree of North latitude, is distinctly shown on a map of Claudius Clavus, dated 1427. It also appears on a map in the Pitti palace, Florence, dated 1447, and in one recently found by Nordens Kiöld, in a codex of Ptolemy, at Warsaw, dated 1467; also in a map of Nicolas Donis, of 1471; again in a map of Henricus Martellus, 1489–90. In all these maps, and indeed until long after the time of Columbus and Cabot, Greenland is represented as a territorial appendage of Scandinavian Europe (Winsor, Columbus, page 140). It is quite impossible to think that Cabot, who had bent his whole mind to the study and exploration of this passage to the North-west, should have been ignorant of the position of Greenland. Immediately after the voyages of Cabot and Cortereal, we begin to find the first glimmer of the truth of Greenland's separation from Northern Europe. This appears first on the Cantino map, 1500, drawn in explanation of Cortereal's voyage, and in vindication of his claim for Portugal of Cabot's New-found-land. There Greenland appears very distinctly and correctly marked, showing Cape Farewell in latitude 60° North; and, though the upper portion of it is left undefined, still it seems clear that it has no connection with Europe. Nevertheless, its exact position was not well understood for more than half a century afterwards. Thus, on the map of Ruysch (1508), we find Greenland not

only separated from Europe, but, by going to the opposite extreme, it is attached to the New-found-land of Baccalaos. But in the celebrated Ribero map, of 1529, it is again made a northern peninsula of Europe, stretching out west from Norway; while on the maps of Ruscelli (1544) and Gastaldi (1548), a continuous belt of land connects Norway, Greenland, and Baccalaos. In all cases, however, Greenland is a prominent feature in the cartography of the Northern Atlantic ocean. On the maps of Zeno, and the codex found in Warsaw (1467), Greenland is profusely named with promontories, rivers and settlements. It cannot then be doubted for a moment that Cabot knew of this land, and that it would be necessary for him to make the southern point of it (Cape Farewell), and, doubling this point, bear away towards the north-west. This is what he tried to do, as we shall see, and which, to some extent, he succeeded in doing.

TURNS HIS PROW NORTH.

I have already shown that Cabot, after doubling Cape Clear (S. W. point of Ireland), turned his prow northwardly, and sailed for some days along the west shores of Ireland and Scotland, in the direction of Iceland. Raimondo Soncini, who tells us this important fact, not being a nautical man, is, unfortunately, not sufficiently exact on this point. He simply says: "Having sailed north for some days" *(qualche giorni)*. Taking this expression in the ordinary acceptation of the words, we may allow three or four days. Now, the navigators said, on their return from the first voyage, that the New-found-land was about 700 leagues away, and, that "now that we know where to go," we can go there in fifteen days. That would give a rate of sailing of about 140 miles a day, or nearly six knots an hour. Thus 700 leagues equals, say 2,100 miles, and 140 miles, for fifteen days, equals 2,100. Applying this rate of sailing (140 miles in 24 hours equals 5.8-10 or 5.8 knots per hour) to the course along the westcoast of Ireland and Scotland for, say four days, this would bring him northwardly 560 miles ($140 \times 4 = 560$). He would then be in the neighborhood of St. Kilda's or Rockall, or between that and the Orkney

Islands, in North Latitude, about 60°. This would be due east of Cape Farewell, in Greenland, and Mugford, near Cape Chidley, in Labrador. This calculation is borne out by the testimony of all the historians who have written upon the subject. For, although differing among themselves as to the *exact* distance which Cabot sailed northward before turning westwardly, yet they combine sufficiently well to give us a fair idea of the locality. It may be here remarked that none of the four letters mentioned above, as, undoubtedly, speaking of the *first* voyage, have any mention of Latitude; and it has been said that the subsequent writers, Gomara, Peter Martyr, and others, when they mention Latitude, were speaking expressly of the second voyage, if not, they were confounding the two voyages together. Whatever may be thought of this, it does not affect the present argument. We know now, for certain, that Cabot went north on his first voyage, before turning west. There is no reason to suppose that he went north on the second, as we shall see. Hence, when these writers tell us that he went north to a certain point, we are safe in applying that statement to the first voyage, even though the writer himself may have been confounding the two voyages. Some writers, indeed, have only known of one voyage of Cabot, and some have spoken of three into these Northern Latitudes.

STATEMENTS OF VARIOUS WRITERS.

Now the statements of the various writers, at first sight, appear to be utterly irreconcilable. They range over a space of twelve and a half degrees, or 750 miles, namely, from North Latitude 55° to North Latitude 67½°. Thus, Ramusio (*Sommario delle Jude*) gives 55° as the extreme limit. But, in another place, the same writer (*Conversazione a Caffi*) gives 56°. Again, he says Sebastian Cabot wrote him, saying he went as far north as 67½°; Gomara says 67°; Sir Humphrey Gilbert says 67⅓°. It has become the fashion for modern writers, especially Harisse, the latest author on the question, to attribute all this confusion to the mendacious and deceptive statements of Sebastian Cabot; in fact, Harisse, in his latest work, does not leave Sebastian a shred of a character. Dr. Dawson

follows suit, and I am sorry to see he is imitated by some of our most prominent local writers. It very often happens that modern writers, when they meet with an apparent contradictory statement, are immediately ready to accuse these early voyagers of ignorance and bad faith. It never occurs to them that the ignorance may be on their own side. I am fully convinced it is so in this merciless onslaught on Sebastian Cabot. A little more careful study, and especially the consideration of this northern detour of Cabot, will help to show how all these apparently conflicting statements can be reconciled. The mystery is unraveled; the fog, which has so long beset these voyages, at once rises, and all is clear to our vision. Those writers, who speak of 55°, 56°, 57°, 58°, and 60°, are speaking of the point to which Cabot sailed northwardly, along the coasts of Ireland and Scotland, before turning westward towards Greenland and Labrador. This is no mere supposition. It is clearly stated by Gomara, "he took the route to Iceland" (says that historian) "until he came beyond the latitude of the Cape of Labrador, until he reached the fifty-eighth degree or more. The cape or *cusp* (as he very appropriately calls it) of Labrador is Cape Chidley. It is, however, a little north of the 60° of latitude. It will be seen, then, that all these above statements, concerning the latitude, do not refer at all to the position of the landfall, as many have thought, but to the point reached before turning west. The other statements which speak of 67°, 67⅓°, 67½° and 68°, refer to the second voyage, as I shall show further on.

Now, then, when Cabot had sailed for some days north towards Iceland, and had reached some 560 miles, or about the 60° of latitude—the exact latitude of Cape Farewell—he began to bend his course westwards, and face the unknown waste of waters. We have no reliable statement as to the exact course steered by Cabot when he turned his prow "Westward, ho!" His own log being lost, we must trust to the statements of men such as Soncini and De Ayala, who, not being nautical men, were not particular as to a point or two. His object was to make Cape Farewell in Greenland, in latitude 60° north, and, as well as he could judge from informa-

tion then available, about 400 leagues or 1200 miles to the westward. He would not be much affected by winds or currents until he had made Cape Farewell. In fact, any effect they might have would be to facilitate his making that point.

A NAVIGATOR'S EXPERIENCE.

One of our veteran navigators, the Hon. Capt. Cleary, has recently described to me a voyage which he made over forty years ago (1853) over the very route run by Cabot. He left Copenhagen on October 13th, came out thro the Cattegat and Skager Rack, passed between the Orkneys and Shetlands (exactly in latitude 60° north), and tho he tried all he could to make southwardly, during the passage across, he could not gain an inch that way. The first land he saw was Cape Farewell in Greenland. He was then carried southward and westward by the Arctic current. The next land he made was Signal Hill, near St. John's harbor, on December 9th—fifty-nine days out. Incidentally, the captain stated, that it would be impossible for Cabot, having in view to make land to the westward of Greenland, to make Cape Breton. "He might have made Labrador coast, near Domino, or Indian Tickle, or he might have made some point on the north-east shore of Newfoundland, such as Cape Bonavista or Cape St. John; it would depend on the wind. The Arctic or Labrador current would carry him southwards at about two to four knots per hour, or forty-five miles in twenty-four hours.

DR. DAWSON'S ARGUMENT.

Dr. S. E. Dawson, in his recent monograph has a paragraph on the variation of the compass in the Northern Atlantic at the time of the voyages. He acknowledges his indebtedness, in this scientific question, to the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey for 1881 and 1888. The general result of the observations is, that the variation at that time was much less than it is at present—about one-half. The variation at present is nearly three points (33¾°) west. In Cabot's time it was about one point and a half (16½°). Dr. Dawson endeavors, from the consideration of this subject, to draw an argument in

favor of the Cape Breton theory of the landfall. He says that Columbus "though sailing in a latitude much further south "than Cabot, and one in which the variation is slighter, being "about one point (11¼°), yet, when he made his landfall, had "dropped some 240 miles south from the latitude of his point "of departure at Gomara. It is altogether probable that John "Cabot, with a variation of a point and a half, would have "dropped some 360 miles to the south of his starting point, "near Cape Clear (in latitude 53°). This, argues Dr. Daw-"son, would have carried him south of Cape Race, and to the "next probable landfall, Cape Breton. In any case, Labra-"dor, as a landfall, is excluded."

I must candidly confess that there is not much force in that argument, from a nautical point of view. Without impugning the results of the Geodetic survey (if correctly stated by Dr. Dawson), I must say that we can not admit the conclusion arrived at, for we know, for a positive fact, from the bearings most minutely given by Jacques Cartier, between well-known points in Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, in the year 1534 (only thirty-seven years after Cabot's time), that the variation of the compass was very little, if anything, divergent from that of the present day. Secondly, the geographical and maritime conditions, viz., currents, winds, etc., are so immensely different in the zone, traversed by Cabot, and that by Columbus, that any argument drawn, *a pari*, from one to the other, is quite inadmissable. But, if there were any force in it at all, it would be knocked out by the fact that Dr. Dawson proceeds from an entirely false starting point.

The learned Dr. Dawson, in his pamphlet, p. 55, admits something of a northering on the part of Cabot after rounding Cape Clear. Thus he says: "The course of the first voyage was south of Ireland, then for a while north, and afterwards west." On page 58 he says, "If Cabot laid his course to the west by compass from latitude 53° north, &c." He does not say upon what authority he fixes upon the latitude of 53°, as the point where Cabot turned west. But I presume it is upon the statement attributed to John Ruysch, who is supposed to have been the "Burgundian," who (as stated by Raimondo)

accompanied Cabot on his voyage. He published a map in 1508, the earliest engraved map of Cabot's discoveries. He gives the name of *Baccalauras* to the landfall, and shows Greenland towards the north. He also shows Cape Race under the name of *Cabo de los Portugueses*, showing how firmly Cortereal had imprinted his influence on the public mind. This name survives to the present day in Portugal Cove, near Cape Race. Ruycsh told Beneventanus (the publisher of the Ptoleny edition of 1508) that "Cabot sailed from the south of England to a point in 53° north latitude, and thence due west." If Ruysch is speaking of the northern detour after rounding Cape Clear, this must be a typographical error, for 58°, as 53° north latitude, would only bring him off Galway Bay, a distance of about ninety miles from Cape Clear. Now this would be only about half a day's sailing, and would not agree with the statement of Raimondo that he sailed northerly "for some days" *(qualche giorni)*, nor would it agree with the statements of Gomara, and other historians, that he sailed north until he came opposite the "Cusp of Labrador," that is to say Cape Chidley, in latitude 60½. Hence, I think this statement of Ruysch's may be a mistake, for 58° instead of 53°. If so it would corroborate the statements of these other writers. But it is quite possible that Ruysch is speaking of the point of the landfall, which he places in 53° N. latitude. That would be on the coast of Labrador, near Domino, the place in which J. P. Howley, Esq., places the landfall. But, if, as I have endeavored to show, Cabot made Cape Farewell, in Greenland, before making the landfall, it is not necessary to waste any further time in discussing how far north he sailed on the west shore of Ireland before turning west.

CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS.

It is astonishing how, when the true key to a historical puzzle has been found, statements, which before were passed by as of no consequence, or, indeed, as contradictory, immediately assume a value and importance in evidence of the truth. Thus, in the only three contemporary documents existing as evidence of the first voyage, and which I have already mentioned, viz.,

the letters of Pasquaglio, Soncini, and DeAyala, there is a most remarkable discrepancy of statement as to the distance of the New-found-land from Europe. Soncini and DeAyala placed the new land at 400 (four hundred) leagues distant, while Pasquaglio gives it as 700 (seven hundred) leagues. These contradictory statements have hitherto been passed over with the usual sneer of contempt for the ignorance an inexactitude of the writers of those times. Now, it appears, both are true, and the theory I am expounding explains them quite naturally.

Cabot, turning westwardly from about St. Kilda's, and sailing for four hundred leagues exactly, would encounter Cape Farewell, in Greenland, as we have seen in the case of Captain Cleary. Thus would be verified the statements of Raimondo and De Ayala. To make this more clear, I may remark that Raimondo says, "at 400 leagues he (Cabot) found *Terra Firma.*" Now, on the map of Majollo (1527), Cape Farewell, in Greenland, is quite distinctly given as is named *Terra Firma.* Cabot made no delay and no landfall at this place. He knew well what it was, and that his goal was still further westward. He saw that it was bleak and uninviting, even then (early in June) probably covered with snow. He passed on in search of the Northwest passage. Here was met, of course, the great Labrador current, which drew him south-westward as before mentioned, but, at about 300 leagues further on he would strike land, either New-found-land or Labrador. This would make up the 700 leagues mentioned by Pasquaglio. If then this theory be accepted as true, if Cabot made Cape Farewell, it would put for ever out of Court the claims or pretensions of Cape Breton. It would be simply impossible that he could have been carried south so as to "miss Cape Race," as Dr. Dawson says, and then turn up into the Gulf to find Cape Breton. He would have to drop southwards at least 900 miles. But there are many other reasons which render the pretensions of Cape Breton quite untenable, to which I shall allude by-and-by.

The distance from Greenland to Labrador is about 800 miles. If we allow Cabot six days to make that distance, at 140 miles a day, more or less; and, if we allow him to drift southwest-

wards by force of the Labrador current, at the rate of fifty miles in twenty-four hours, that would bring him southward about 300 miles before striking land. In that case he would make the landfall on Labrador coast, about Latitude 55°, or in the neighborhood of Byron Bay. He may, however, have been carried further south, and struck on the Newfoundland coast. "It would depend on the winds," as Captain Cleary remarks. That he was buffeted about a great deal we know from Soncini (*Avendo errato assai*): also we know that it took him fifty-two days to make the passage across, so he must have met much head wind.

BANNER OF ST. MARK.

We learn from Soncini that Cabot planted the banner of St. Mark on his New-found-land, "by reason of his being a Venetion." Also, from Clement Adams, that he called a small Island, which stood out from the land, by the name of St. John, as it was on the Saint's day (June 24th) that he made land. Now, on all the early maps, such as those of Majollo, Verazzano, and Ribero, which were made only thirty years after Cabot's discovery, we invariably find these names, Isle of St. John and Cape St. Marc, exactly in this latitude. There is a St. Mark's Island there at the present day on Labrador coast. I am of opinion, however, that the landfall was further south, namely, on the east coast of Newfoundland. There are other reasons in favor of it, which we shall return to later on.

As the second voyage throws indirectly some light on the first, before coming to the immediate consideration of the landfall, I shall here take up the consideration of the second voyage.

The matter of the change in the Calendar has also caused some confusion of statements concerning the date of this voyage. Some writers giving the date 1498, others 99. But the date of the Letters Patent, as found by Biddle in the Rolls Chapel, being the 13th (XIII) year of the King's reign, settles all disputes on this question. The letters are dated the 3rd of February, XIII year of Henry Seventh. The 13th year of Henry VII's reign was from August 1497 to August

1498. The year 1497, according to the Calendar as above mentioned, ended on the 24th of March ('97 o.s., '98 n.s.) Hence the 3rd of February of the 13th year of Henry VII was in the year 1497 (o.s.) as then calculated. The expedition sailed from Bristol about the beginning of May following, namely, 1498; that is to say *three* months after the date of the Patent; not *fifteen* months as some writers have said. This second charter was given to John Cabot alone, but Sebastian went with him. The King gave permission to have six ships, of 200 tons each, with 300 men, and it would seem that His Majesty was a little more generous this time. It is stated that he fitted out at least two of the ships from the Royal Exchequer, tho even that is doubtful.

TAKING THE SHORTEST ROUTE.

The expedition was supplied for a twelve months' cruise, and probably did not return till some time in 1499. We know for certain that they had not returned up to the end of October, 1498: and it is most probable that they wintered in the Baccalaos. As to the course of this second voyage, for many reasons, I believe that they did not make the detour northwards along the west coast of Ireland this time, but struck out boldly northwest from Cape Clear, making the great circle with the intention of reaching the New-found-land as soon as possible. This was their express intention, as mentioned by Soncini. Cabot's men said: "Now that we know where to go, we can reach there in fifteen days." This implied going by the shortest and most direct route. They were no longer terrified by doubts and fears of the unknown region of darkness. They were no longer aiming at an uncertainty, but had a definite object, and went direct for it. "He intends," Raimondo continues, "starting from the point already occupied the previous year (i.e. 1497) and to go further westwards (or east as he calls it), coasting or cabotaging along all the time." That is to say, he intended to make direct for the landfall, and having made it, to start from there in his search for the Northwest passage to Cathay. Hence Peter Martyr, and Ramusio Galvano, Fabian and others tell us they sailed towards the

Northwest. There is no mention, this time, of steering towards Iceland.

From this, then, we have also an indirect proof of the landfall of the first voyage. It must have been the same, or somewhere near the same, as that of the first, and this fact also destroys the theory of Cape Breton. Dr. Dawson, though he is very confused and inaccurate on this point, yet can be refuted from his own words. He says (page 55) that "the course of the second voyage, until land was seen, was North; into the Northern seas; towards the North Pole; in the direction of Iceland; to the Cape of Labrador." Here there is an astonishing amount of confusion from such a learned writer; but, taking him at his word, in a general way, he says the course of the second voyage was towards the north-west—towards Labrador. But we know, from what is said above, that the general trend of this voyage was the same as the previous one, and the point aimed at was the landfall of the voyage of 1497, viz., Baccalaos, hence the landfall of the *first* voyage must also have been towards the north, not towards Cape Breton.

THE DEMARCATION LINE.

This argument is confirmed by the voyages which immediately followed those of Cabot. On the very year after Cabot's return (1500), as soon as the news of his discoveries had reached Portugal, King Emanuel of that country at once fitted out an expedition under Gaspar de Cortereal, who sailed in the direction of Cabot's landfall, and rediscovering the same lands, claimed them for the King of Portugal. It will be remembered that, shortly before this time, the celebrated dividing line or line of demarcation, was drawn thro the map of the Atlantic Ocean by Pope Alexander VI. This line was drawn from pole to pole by the hand of the Pope himself, at a point 12° west from Cape Verde. All land east of this line was declared to belong to Portugal, all west of it to Spain. In order to claim the New-land, discovered by Cabot, the Portuguese brought it eastwards so as to come on the eastern side of the dividing line and called it *Terra del Rey de Portugal*. They drew a map thus showing it; and the land on this map is, beyond all

doubt, Newfoundland. This Cantino map shows a very distinct and accurate outline of the East Coast of Newfoundland, from Cape Race northward. In the northern part of the map is visible, also accurately outlined, Cape Farewell in Greenland. Newfoundland is brought forward (i.e. eastward) about 300 miles, so as to be in the position of the eastward limb of the Grand Bank, and thus on the eastern side of the second dividing line (i.e., the dividing line of *Tor des Illas*). So efficaciously did Cortereal palm of this deception on Europe, that the error crept into the general cartography of the period, and so, on the map of Ribero (1527) and others, Newfoundland is brought forwards, so as to come on the eastward side of the dividing line. We shall return to the voyage of Cortereal after a short while.

THE NORTHERN LIMIT.

The second voyage of Cabot, 1498, had for its object, principally, as well as the first, the discovery of the Northwest passage to Cathay. In the beginning of this lecture I spoke of some writers having stated that Cabot went as far north as 67 or 68 degrees. These statements, as I then said, belong to this second voyage, but they do not indicate the landfall, but the distance to which Cabot sailed north, after having first made the landfall, "the place already occupied the previous year" (1497), as Soncini says *(da quello loco gia occupato)*. Hence, having arrived at the landfall *(Baccalaos)*, and refreshed and reposed themselves, taken in, no doubt, wood and water, they coasted northwardly along the shore of Labrador, till they came to Cape Chidley (the cusp in 60½ degrees); they then entered the Hudson's Strait, and Fox's Channel, and penetrated up to 67 or 67½ degrees. Peter Martyr says they went so far north that they became surrounded by floating ice, even in the month of July *(donec etiam Julio mense vastas reperet glaciales moles pelago natantes)*. Gomara says: "They went so far North that the days were very long, almost without night, and what night there was, was very bright." Hence they must have been within the Arctic circle. Sir Humphrey Gilbert says, "Cabot entered this fret (i.e. Hudson's Straits)

Cortereal, as we know they had no knowledge of the Gulf. Ramusio says Cortereal went as far north as 60°, where he found a great river full of snow and ice, and weather extremely cold *(grandissimi freddi)*. This river, which he called Rio Nevado (snowy river), is unquestionably the Hudson Strait, and thus we see how closely Cortereal is on the track of Cabot. He (Ramusio) says that 200 leagues south from this, in latitude 56°, there is a harbor called *Porto de Maluas*. This is a mixing of Italian, French and Spanish. Maluas is a corruption of the French Molues (for Morue), codfish. The latitude 56° north is on Labrador, about the position of *Nain* at the present day. "From Porto de Maluas to Capo Marzo is sixty leagues" (coming southwards). Applying to this statement the same scale of measurement, viz., 1½ miles to a league, we come south ninety miles, or 1½ degrees, and find ourselves still on the coast of Labrador, near Hopedale. This is the place where Ramusio fixes Cape Marzo, that is to say the Cape Mark of Cabot. Now, from the statement of Pasquaglio already quoted, it would appear that Cape Mark was at or near the landfall. "He planted on his Newfoundland," says Pasquaglio, "a large cross, with one flag of England and one of St. Mark." This is strong evidence for Labrador as the landfall. But immediately afterwards Ramusio speaks of Baccalaos as being further south. The most northerly point of Baccalaos, he says, is "in 48½° north latitude, and is called C. Bonavista." Now, as Cabot called the country of his landfall by the generic name of Baccalao, this goes strongly for Newfoundland as the landfall, and tho it points out Cape Bonavista as a most prominent and important point, yet it does not prove it exactly the landfall. All this description, however, shows us that the history of those early voyages all turns our thoughts to a northerly latitude, between 48° and 60°, and it shows that all thoughts of a land in the latitude of Cape Breton (46°) are entirely out of the question. Cape Breton has evidently no *locus standi* in these early voyages.

CAPE NORTH.

The theory of Cape North as the landfall owes its origin to the discovery in 1843 of a map called the Cabot map. I saw

and examined this celebrated map last summer in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, in Paris. There is no date on the map itself, and no name of cartographer; but, on a printed paper pasted on the map, it is stated that it was made by Sebastian Cabot in 1544.* To go into a critical examination of this map would require almost a lecture in itself. I may merely say that at the point of Cape North, of Cape Breton Island, there is an inscription "*prima tierra iusta*" (the last word is *iusta*, evidently intended for uista). This gave origin to the Cape North theory. Whoever made the map (knowing that Cabot saw a large Island off the coast, which he called St. John), placed on this map a large Island off Cape North, and called it St. John, in order to suit the map to the supposed theory. But there is no island in reality corresponding to the imaginary Island drawn on this map. The only Island near Cape North is St. Paul's, but it does not correspond to the Island marked on this Cabot map. About 200 years afterwards (1697), the Island which we now call Prince Edward, received, by mistake, the name of St. John. Now, the supporters of the Cape North theory, accepting the Cabot map, looked about for the Island of St. John, which Cabot says was "off the coast"; and, finding this Island of St. John, they maintained that this was the same island. This new theory of Cabot's landfall was immediately adopted by many writers, and it was thought the question of Cabot's landfall was settled. Rev. Dr. Harvey, in his History of Newfoundland, pp. 5 and 6, accepted the theory without hesitation. He says "all doubts on this subject have been removed by the discovery, a few years since, of a map made under the direction of Sebastian Cabot." In a question of this kind, it is not to be supposed that opinions may not change as more light, or a different shade of light, is thrown upon the subject. Hence we find that, in his later writings, our learned historian has changed his views on the subject, or at least his conviction has become modified, as I shall show later on.

The learned Dr. Dawson, who is the chief mover in the Canadian celebration of Cabot's quater-centennary, has only

*The printing is evidently of a very recent date. Harrisse says that the legends on the map were written by one Dr. Grajales.

ite recently, as he himself declares, taken up the study of bot's voyages. In a very short time he discovered that the eory founded on the Cabot map was utterly absurd and un- nable. Here are his words. He says one of his principal otives in writing his latest article was "to dispel . . . the g that was gathering around our early geographical history, n the shape of a theory that Cabot had entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and discovered Prince Edward Island, and had named it St. John." He calls this an "utterly baseless notion" (p. 4). He goes on then to say that it would be absolutely impossible for Cabot to make Cape North. "In sailing into the Gulf," he says, "either the high-land of Newfoundland will be seen on the right, or the high-land of Cap Enfume on the left, before Cape North will be seen at all. It is like sailing into an acute angle, one side or the other will be seen before the apex." While quite agreeing in the conclusion come to by Dr. Dawson, that "it would be absolutely impossible for Cabot to make Cape North," we do so from very different reasons. Moreover, we assert that the reasons given by Dr. Dawson are not at all admissable or adequate. He says, Cabot should see the land to right or left before he could see Cape North; but how, if he came towards land in a thick fog or at night time? As a matter of fact, we know that it was just at daylight ("four o'clock in the morning"—Clement Adams) that he saw land; he may have been then quite close to it during the night without seeing it. However, it is a fact that Dr. Dawson utterly upsets the whole theory of Cape Breton, advocated for the past 40 years or so.

CHANGES HIS VIEWS.

As mentioned above, the arguments of Dr. Dawson have shaken the absolute certainty with which the Rev. Dr. Harvey, in his History, asserted the theory of Cape North, as I find from his letter to Dr. Bourinot: "It is, perhaps, impossible to decide, with certainty, the landfall of Cabot. The preponderance of evidence is altogether in favor of some part of Cape Breton" (p. XI). It might have been hoped that Dr. Dawson, having knocked away the only support which propped up

the Cape Breton theory (i.e., the Cabot map), would have gone back to the time-honored view of the East Coast of Newfoundland or Labrador; but, alas! he has not done so: he fixes upon another part in Cape Breton as the landfall, viz., Cape Breton (eastermost point of the Island of C.B.), and makes the Island of Scatterie the Isle of St. John, thus broaching quite a new theory.

A MODERN INSTANCE.

The very latest writer on this subject in Europe, Mr. Harrisse, has in his latest work* abandoned the theory of Cape Breton, and gone back to that of Labrador. Dr. Dawson is displeased with him for this, but he himself having, as I said, kicked away the only support on which the theory rested (the Cabot map), Harrisse was but logical in reverting to the old tradition. It is to be hoped that Dr. Dawson, as well as our learned and venerable historian, Rev. Dr. Harvey, may yet be converted to the true faith on this point. We had a few months ago a striking proof of the impossibility (almost absolute) of Cape Breton being the landfall of Cabot. It was the wreck of the steamer *Abbeymoor*, off Renews, near Cape Race. This steamer started from almost the exact spot of Cabot's departure: she came around the north coast of Scotland, passing thro Pentland Frith, between the Orkneys and Caithness, and Southerlandshire in latitude 58° 35′ N., almost exactly the height to which Cabot sailed, then she struck out on her course westwards. They had all the minute and perfect knowledge of modern nautical science, the exact bearings of the compass—variation corrected up to date; the latest and most improved nautical instruments. Moreover, they had a knowledge of the exact position of Cape Race, its latitude and longitude. They made every allowance for currents, and all other disturbing causes. Coming near the longitude of the East Shore of Newfoundland, it became foggy; for some days they had no observations. Hence they gave themselves what they considered a good wide berth for Cape Race; according to their calculations they were seventy miles south of the Cape, when, sud-

*John and Sebastian Cabot.

denly in the fog, they struck on Renews Rock! Now let us consider Cabot; he started from the same place. He had no idea of the position of land. He's general object was to keep westerly and northerly as much as possible. Is it possible to believe that Cabot, under those circumstances, could have drifted against all natural causes, south of Cape Race. This is what we are asked to suppose, but this is not all. The same fortuitous causes which drove him south of Cape Race, must have then ceased to exist, and a contrary set of causes set in, in order to drive him up again into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. He must have been at least 70 miles south of Cape Race, or else he could not have made Cape Breton without coming in contact either with the Burin peninsula or St. Pierre. From such a position, in order to make the point of Cape Breton at Scatterie, his course would have to be W.N.W., and to reach Cape North in Cape Breton, his course would have to be changed to N.W. Any nautical man will be able to understand from this the absurdity of the remark of Dr. Dawson, that "Cape Breton was a natural landfall after missing Cape Race" (p. 62).

This remark of Dr. Dawson may appear quite reasonable to the ordinary reader looking without professional skill on the map; but, to people born with the "nautical sense," as we are here in Newfoundland, it is at once obviously absurd and impossible. I have this statement repeated from several of our most experienced captains. Dr. Dawson says of Mr. Harisse: "I have all the advantages of Mr. Harisse's learning and labor, but the adventitious circumstance of being born among the localities under discussion, and, therefore, familiar with them from boyhood, compels me to see that Mr. Harisse's judgment . . . is misled by absence of a personal knowledge," &c. The strength of this argument, which I fully acknowledge, must tell with still greater force in favor of us in Newfoundland, who are really born on the scene of these events, who with our first life-breath have drunk in the "nautical sense," who have lived like the sea-gull amid the billows of the Great Ocean—

* * * The swell
Of whose broad breast, whose milly foam was sap
Of our young lives." . . . .
As she "did o'er us fling
The mantle of her wave, and thrill us with her kiss."

But even if Cabot, by one out of ten thousand chances, should have missed Cape Race, neither the time, courses, nor distance will allow of Cape Breton being the landfall. A most convincing argument against Cape Breton is this: We know Cabot's strong and ruling desire of finding the coveted passage to the west. If then he had made any place in Cape Breton, he would immediately have entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and penetrated the great river, thinking he had found the long-looked-for passage, as did Cartier a few years later. This we know he did not do, and Dr. Dawson himself admits it. How can it be explained? If it be said he had not time on his first voyage, and was obliged to return at once to Europe, then why did he not do it on his second voyage? We are told, by Soncini, he intended on the second voyage to come out to the landfall of the first, and then, from there, coast along westwards *(da quello loco gia occupato andarsi a mano a mano verso l'occidente)*. And this he did, but it was not from Scattarie or Cape North into the Gulf and up the St. Lawrence, but along the Labrador coast and into Hudson's Strait.

I shall now make a few remarks on the respective merits of Labrador (54°–55° north latitude), and the east coast of Newfoundland. Either of these sites is a possible landfall; that is to say there is nothing in the general history and object of the voyages to render either of these sites an impossibility—distance, course, time, etc., all are equally suited for either one or the other. I have, I think, pretty fairly and impartially given the arguments in favor of

LABRADOR.

The reasons urged against the Labrador as the landfall are:—First, that it would be impossible for Cabot to arrive there on account of the ice, on June 24th. Secondly, it is objected that Cabot and his sailors said that the land they discovered was rich in soil, well wooded, and of temperate climate, quite capable of raising the silk and dye-woods, the Bresil tree, etc. In reply to the first objection, it may be simply answered that it is not true that Cabot could not arrive at Labrador, in latitude 54° or 55°, on the 24th of the month of June. As every-

one knows in this country, our Labrador men generally leave about June 7th, and arrive at Labrador June 20th. Again, the persons who make this objection admit that, on the following year, 1498, Cabot not only made Labrador, but went as far north into Hudson's Strait as the 67th or 68th degree of latitude. As to the second objection, about the fertility of the land, growth of wood, etc., I must first say that it is utterly untrue that Labrador is not wooded ; and it is astounding that people keep repeating this statement in spite of its having been over and over again refuted. As a matter of fact there are immense forests on Labrador, where timber is found much larger than anything of the kind in Newfoundland or Cape Breton. If any person wishes to be convinced on this point, he has only to look on the Admiralty Survey chart of Labrador, brought to such minute perfection by the patient labor of years under Captain Orlebar. There he will find, in many harbors, such notices as the following : "Wood and water"—"Lowland covered with wood"—Abundance of wood and water," etc. The names of "Woody Island" and "Green Island" frequently occur ; and the Eskimo names *Napatalik* and *Napa-Katakt-alik*, near Hopedale, which mean "*Wood-Island*," and "*Spar-Island*," that is to say "Island where masts of ships may be cut." These names, I say, speak for themselves, and ought to prevent such statements from being made by some writers, without foundation, and repeated by others without investigation.

As to the statements made by Cabot and his men, concerning the temperature of the climate and the fertility of the soil in their New-found-land ; in the first place it is not improbable that they may have exaggerated somewhat on these points. They wished to make the most of the new lands discovered, and induce people to come out to them. This was an old trick, and we are told that it was so done by *Eric Raud* when he discovered Greenland. "If I speak of it as it really is," he said, "no one will come to it"; hence he called it *Greenland*. Again we know that on this first voyage Cabot coasted or *cabotaged* along for 300 leagues. This may have been along the coasts

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] I find that it had nothing to do with Cabot, and I find also how succeeding generations fell into the mistake of applying it to Cabot.

In the letters, already quoted, concerning John Cabot's voyages, Soncino, Pasqualigo, and De Ayala there is no mention of *Buonavista, non prima vista, non terra primum reperta*, nor anything at all of that kind. The only names mentioned in connection with the Cabots and their voyages are: *St. John*, *St. Mark*, *Buccaleus*, *New Isles*, and *New lands*, or *New World*. Such were the names given by Cabot. These names continue up to the present day, but another set of names, of Portuguese ori-

gin, have become intermingled with them, and appear on all the earliest maps, viz.: Fortuna, Fogo, Freilio, Bonavista, Bonaventura, Capo Spera, San Francisco, Capo Raso, &c., every one of which still exists on our shores.

LANDFALL OF CORTEREAL.

Gaspar de Cortereal was Governor of the Island of Terceira in the Azores. It was from there he set out on his voyage to Newfoundland. He had doubtless made himself well-informed of the whereabouts of Cabot's New Lands. It is not at all improbable that he may have got possession of Cabot's papers, map, log, and globe, so mysteriously lost. We have reason to believe that he made almost directly the headland of Newfoundland, which was situated in 48½ degrees North Latitude, and which being a most prominent and important point, must undoubtedly have been seen and well-located by Cabot. To this important headland, Cortereal gave the name of Bonavista. It was most probably his landfall. We have been accustomed to assume that this was a spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm and joy on the part of the mariners at seeing the land for the first time; it may be so, but we must admit that it was a favorite and general name with the Portuguese and Spaniards. It occurs frequently in the Atlantic groups of the Cape Verde, Canary and Madeira Islands, under the form of Boa Vista, Buena Vista, &c. We have here then an example of the custom so common among the early navigators of naming the new lands after the old ones left behind. This Point is particularly mentioned by Ramusio, the historian of Cortereal's voyage, as we have seen. He says it is the most northerly point of Baccalao, and is called Bona Vista; it became at once a most important point. It was the goal of all Northwestern navigators; having made this point they steered north or south, as the case might be. On returning to Europe, just as at the present day, this was the point from which to get a good departure. Thus we find in the first recorded voyages, immediately after the Cabots, this Point or somewhere near about it, is the one invariably made by all navigators. In 1523, just twenty-six years after Cabot's voyage, Verazzano came out on a voyage

of discovery from France. He had it in view to discover an intermediate land between the discoveries of Columbus on the south, and Cabot (or rather now the Portuguese) on the north. Hence, he struck land first in latitude 34° N. (about North Carolina), then he coasted north, as the chronicle says, "Until he came to the land, which in times past (viz., 1497) was discovered by the Britons (viz., Cabot), *which is in latitude* 50° N". Here we see that only twenty-six years after Cabot's time, the tradition was in vogue, and that these Northeastern shores of Newfoundland were the land discovered by Cabot. There was no idea in those early days of Cabot having touched land any place near the latitude of Cape Breton (45° 10′ N.). Again in 1534, thirty-seven years after Cabot's time, we find Jacques Cartier coming out direct from St. Malo, in France, and making Bonavista with astonishing exactness. He mentions the name of Bonavista and Catalina (St. Catherine's Harbor), as if they were well-known at the time; but he says nothing about their naming or discovery. In 1535, the following year, he again made nearly the same point, viz., the Bird Islands (now the Funks), in lat. 49° 40′, about 65 miles north of Bonavista.

CAPE ST. JOHN.

I have now a few words to say regarding my own particular opinion. I believe I am the only person who has fixed upon Cape St. John as the landfall. I may say that this is not, strictly speaking, a new theory. It is included in the theory of the Northeast Coast of Newfoundland. It is only a question of a very few miles between it and Bonavista, an absolutely trifling distance when the whole breadth of the Atlantic ocean is considered. Cape St. John is a high and prominent headland, forming the northern point of Notre Dame Bay. It has received some importance in modern times from being the point fixed on by the treaty of Utrecht (1713) as the limit of the French fishing rights. The southeast point of what is known as the "French Shore." It is situated *exactly* on the parallel of 50° North Latitude. The line runs right thro the bill of the Cape on the map. It is in longitude 55° 27′ west, being thus just two degrees and a half, or about one hundred miles

further west than Bonavista. Hence Bonavista is a more important and prominent point for vessels coming from the eastwards. Hence it is, that, altho I believe Cabot first made land at Cape St. John, yet he afterwards fixed on the point now called Bonavista, as the signal point for voyagers from Europe, and to take a departure from on going eastwards. I am sure that John Cabot took special and particular bearings of this point. I believe it to be the point of which Soncini is speaking, when he says Cabot made certain signal marks (*presi certi segnali*), and I feel confident that if we could find John Cabot's map, we should see this point (now called Bonavista) distinctly marked, and its latitude clearly and correctly given. Yet all this would not shake my belief in the view of his first having had sight of land at Cape St. John a few miles further north.

FEAST OF ST. JOHN DE BAPTIST.

My reasons are briefly stated: firstly, the name. If there is one fact clearly handed down by tradition, it is that Cabot struck land on the feast of St. John the Baptist, June 24th, and gave the name of the saint to the land first seen. The name of St. John is to be seen at this point from the very earliest maps in our possession—Ribero, &c. (1527), just thirty years after Cabot, and it is there to-day. It is true that Cabot gave the name St. John, not to the mainland, but to an Island off the shore: but it is quite a customary thing for names to be transferred from islands to the mainland opposite, and *vice versa*. It was thus that Prince Edward Island received, by mistake, as I stated before, the name of St. John. It had been given by Cartier (1534) to a cape on Newfoundland shore, near Cape Anguille, and was transferred first to the Magdalen Islands opposite, and finally from these to the Island afterwards (in 1799) called Prince Edward, after the visit of Edward, duke of Kent.

The Island seen off the coast by Cabot is described on the Cabot map as a "large island"—"una ysla grande." There is no island off Cape Bonavista to correspond to this description. There are only some small islands or rocks, namely, Gull Island, Green Island, Stone Island, The Spillars, &c.;

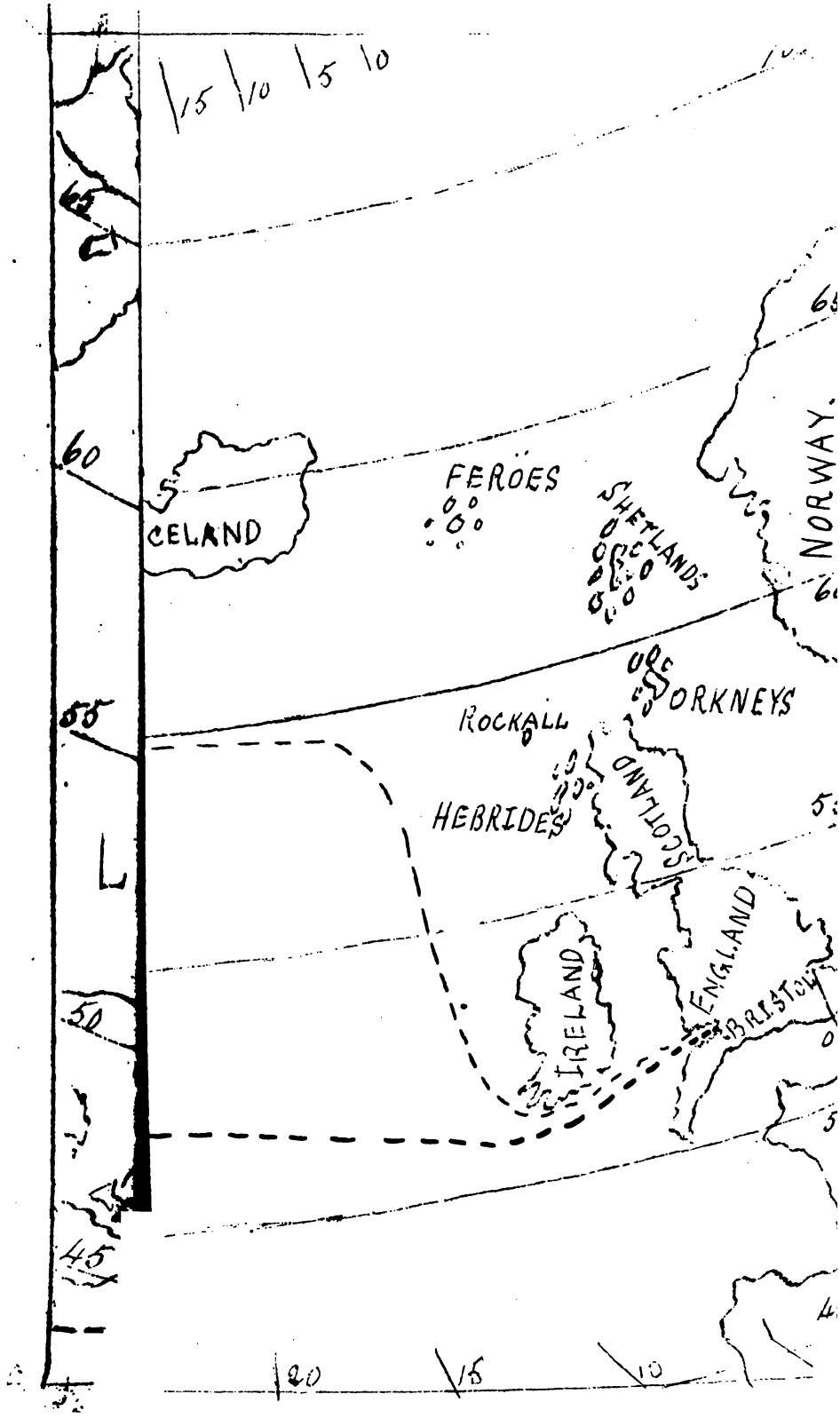
but not far from Cape St. John is the large Island which bears to this day the remarkable name of "*New-World-Island.*" The very name by which Cabot's New Land or New Isles, or New Found Isle, was frequently known. And quite near to this is the other large island which bears to-day the name of Fogo—a name found constantly on all the old maps.

Finally: in relation to the voyage of Verazzano, which I mentioned before as having taken place in 1523, only twenty-six years after Cabot, it is stated in the chronicle that he came to the land formerly (i.e. in 1497) discovered by Cabot, "which is in latitude 50°." That is, as I have shown, above the exact latitude of Cape St. John. Thus, then, taking the name and the latitude into account, I believe this point to have been the landfall; at all events, it shows that at that early period the tradition was in favor of Cape St. John, as the site of the landfall.

SIGNAL STATION AND OBSERVATORY.

In conclusion, I would say that I regard the idea of a Signal Station and Observatory on the site of the block-house, as a most suitable memorial for the Cabot quater-centenary. There can be no doubt that this country occupies the most important position—geographically, nautically, and commercially—on the face of the globe. It is a half-way station on the great Atlantic highway, a thousand miles nearer to Europe than any other place in America. It is most important for astronomical, geodetical, and submarine observations; it is the landing-place of the great inter-continental cables; it is the jewel-clasp which binds the electric ring that encircles the zone of the earth; it is the starting point of the great exploration parties to the North Pole; and I have no doubt, that immediately upon the completion of our great railway system, all these advantages will be acknowledged by the world. Some people seem to think that the proposed Cabot celebration is but a mere puerile and senseless demonstration; but such is not the case. We should, by this demonstration, be securing to ourselves our merited place among the nations: A grand astronomical and meteorological

station on Signal Hill, connected by telephone with all the important points of the Island—Cape Spear, Cape Race, Cape Ray, Cape Norman, and Cape Bauld; and by telegraph and cable with all the principal seaports and scientific centers in the world! Such a project would be no mere childish pageant, but would raise us at once to a high and important position. I have not the slightest doubt that if this matter were properly and (let me say) unanimously set-forth and supported by our people, we would receive immediate and generous assistance from outside countries. So much is our importance, as an observing station, already valued by America, that even now our small and insignificant observatory is, if I mistake not, liberally subsidized by the Smithsonian Institute; and there can be no doubt that our newly proposed Cabot observatory, erected according to the latest and improved designs, and equipped with the best approved instruments and apparatus, would be liberally and eagerly supported by the government of America, and England, also, might hold forth a friendly hand towards us, and thus make some restitution for all she owes us on account of Treaty restrictions. The new observatory would be ornamental as well as useful. It would be a center of practical study, of astronomy, of meteorology, and kindred sciences, for the youth of our various colleges and educational institutions, who would thereby be able to have practical experiments of the theoretical lectures received in their academical halls. It should also be adorned with a lofty and massive tower of our native granite, surmounting which would arise a colossal statue of Cabot, our discoverer and our patron, who would stretch out his protecting arm over our city and our coast; while from his brow should radiate a beacon bright, whose electric rays would flash across the bosom of the ocean, would be a guiding star to the approaching ship, over the tempest tossed billows to the haven of safety, and at the same time would enlighten the hearts of our people with noble aspirations, and fill with sentiments of patriotism and national pride, the minds of our countrymen for centuries to come.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